"My personal experience affected by abortion laws in Northern Ireland: I had an abortion aged 23. I travelled alone to England - I got myself to the airport, went to the clinic alone, took the medications alone, and returned to my room, alone. My partner could not travel with me due to visa restrictions, so he was helpless, tormented by the lack of any role he could play in supporting our mutual decision. He was denied the supportive role he wanted, the role I needed him to take, because I had to get on a plane to receive care I should have been able to access at home. Despite being part of the UK, I was treated differently. I had to sustain harassment outside Marie Stopes in Belfast, a woman who didn't know me, didn't know my story, didn't care for any of it, followed me down the street yelling I was wrong to hurt my baby. Marie Stopes provide other facilities besides, but that was irrelevant to her. I had been in to have my pregnancy dated before I could proceed with flying over to England. Once I arrived, alone, in the clinic a week later, I was met with pity. My taxi driver commented on the fact he alone had driven so many women from the north to an abortion clinic. He could not fathom how it was tolerated that we be treated this way. Nor do I. And I am sick of it. Sick of the demonising of women making an informed and personal decision; sick of this government blocking all they can; trying to deny MY access to care services. IT is not tolerated in any other UK jurisdiction, so why is it here? I am not ashamed, nor have any regrets, about my decision to have an abortion. I am ashamed by how this society allows the viewpoint that it should be a shameful decision to be exported, and that this government propagates this by denying women in NI the services other UK women can access. I was in college, working two jobs, and had to silently carry the financial burden on top of the emotional one. I think this unfair, and I never want finances to be a major factor in any persons decision as to whether they should remain pregnant. Section 58 and 59 of the Offences Against the Persons Act must be repealed. Urgently.

My friends/family/colleagues view on abortion: They have come to realise the very real decisions that must be made when deciding on pregnancy status. While they were previously on the same page as that preached from religious pulpits, that abortion is murder, they now appreciate that it is in many instances the correct decision. They know that it is a private decision, and one that should be made by the pregnant person. They now believe it should be accessible to women without prejudice nor discrimination in NI.

An example of how views on abortion have moved on: My mother, a religious person, and my siblings, who were also raised on the christian school-taught belief that abortion equates to murder, have developed a more nuanced opinion. They now appreciate the central role of the pregnant person, their circumstances, their well-being, and need for a carefully considered approach to pregnancy. My family and friends, people who would have said no to abortion in all cases, would now support a law which would care for pregnant people and allow a woman to decide if she wants to become a mother, whether she wants to continue with a pregnancy, and one which would allow them to seek and receive non-judgmental abortion care at home.

What should the UK govt. do?: Repeal sections 58 & 59 of the Offences Against the Persons Act and cease criminal sanctions for abortions, allowing legal access in Northern Ireland

Why is devolution not a barrier?: NI women obtain abortions. FACT. NI women live in the UK. FACT. NI women are currently denied access to safe abortion and abortion care. FACT. This is a human rights issue, and a very real threat to NI womens’ health. Stormont do not serve the NI community, and women accessing abortion should not be dictated by religious, corrupt, politicians. The UK government need to step-in and grant what NI women should have always had. It is time to act NOW."